

REMARKS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 8, 9, and 11 stand rejected. Claims 2-7 and 10 have been objected. On entry of this amendment, claim 2, 8, 9, and 11 have been cancelled. New claims 12-21 have been added. Claims 1, 3-7, 10, and 12-21 are pending.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate all limitations of claim 2. Claims 3-7 and 10 now depend from claim 1.

New claim 12 incorporates all limitations of former claim 1 and claim 3. Claims 13-18 depend from claim 12.

New claim 18 incorporates all limitations from former claim 1 and claim 5. Claims 19-21 depend from claim 18.

With respect to all amendments and cancelled claims, Applicant has not dedicated or abandoned any unclaimed subject matter and moreover have not acquiesced to any rejections and/or objections made by the Patent Office. Applicant reserves the right to pursue prosecution of any presently excluded claim embodiments in future continuation and/or divisional applications.

Rejections under 35 §§ U.S.C. 102(e) and 103

The Examiner's Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 8, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 over Glover. The Examiner has further rejected claim 9 over Glover in view of Official Notice.

The Examiner has objected to claims 2-7 and 10 as dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Examiner further states that claims 2-7 and 10 "would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims."

Applicant's Response

Without admitting or acquiescing to the Examiner's rejection, Applicant has canceled claims 2, 8, 9, and 11.

Consistent with the Examiner's position that certain dependent claims would be allowable if "rewritten in independent form," Applicant has rewritten claims 2-7 and 10 in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Specifically, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate all limitations of claim 2, and claims 3-7 and 10 depend from amended claim 1. New independent claim 12 incorporates former claim 1 and dependent claim 3. Claims 13-17 depend from claim 12. New independent claim 18 incorporates former claim 1 and dependent claim 5. Claims 19-21 depend from claim 19.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102(e) and 103 be withdrawn. In addition, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to claims 2-7 and 10 be withdrawn.

Conclusion

Because the dependent claims deemed allowable by the Examiner have been rewritten in independent form, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no.